

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions From July 9, 2001 All Hands Meeting (Forrestal)

Q. When filing a document, how large can it be?

A. When filing a document in the ForeMost records management system, there is no limitation on the size at this time. We are reviewing our long-term requirements and options in preparation for storage issues anticipated in the future as the volume of records increases.

Q. What percentage of the e-mail is a record?

A. As the CIO office, we have not gathered any statistics on our own. But according to NARA research, approximately 20% of the e-mails created in federal agencies are record material.

Q. Presently, we have ninety days to purge our e-mails. Will that change?

A. The policy on purging e-mails is not affected by this pilot in that "backfile conversion" is outside the scope of this pilot and is therefore not required. Once users have been trained on the records management system, they will begin with the e-mails they create/receive from that day forward. But users should put e-mail records into the system as they go through the purging process.

Q. Do you have to file message by message or can you dump a whole directory at once?

A. You can file an entire directory at once.

Q. Will ForeMost become a desktop standard?

A. We are working with Carol Blackston of the Architecture Group. We are working to include Electronic Records Management Application software as one of the categories of Desktop software that will be standardized. A limited number of choices will be published, we think.

Q. Will there be a restriction on the size of the file attachment?

A. This office (the Records Management Division) will not impose any restrictions on file size.

Q. Where will the ForeMost system reside?

A. The system resides on two Compaq servers in a clustered environment on the network.

Q. Will it include databases? (For example, APPLIX?)

- A.** The ForeMost records management system is docu-centric, not data-centric. Web page issues will be coming down the pike though, as well as issues centering around working from home.

Questions From July 11, 2001 All Hands Meeting (Germantown)

Q. It was mentioned that the sender declares the record. Does the sender also file?

- A.** The Sender also files (or classifies) the document through the ForeMost system as part of the declaration process.

Q. What effect will the system have when people file according to the way they do business? Will it result in e-mails being kept in more than one place?

- A.** It is possible that the e-mail record will be kept in more than one place. But it is hoped that the extra "working copy retained on the personal computer hard drive (not the records repository) will be kept for a minimum time and deleted when the need has passed.

Q. Regarding the repository, how far does it "drill down" through the categories?

- A.** The file hierarchy can accommodate up to twenty levels. To maintain user friendliness and simplicity, the levels in the pilot will not go beyond 3. For example: CIO/Records Management/Email Pilot

Q. Can we still put items in our folders?

- A.** You can still put items in your folders prior to declaring it a record. For example, you may wish to keep the item in your MS Exchange folder until you are ready to declare the item as a record or until you decide what category it goes under in the file plan. Once declaring a record and classifying it, it is not recommended to maintain a copy in you folder and the repository. Parallel filing will defeat the purpose of the central repository. In addition, after classifying the record and sending it to the repository, it does not automatically put a copy in the "sent" folder. If you would like the copy to be retained, you must do that manually, but we hope that this will be minimized as the use of the ForeMost system becomes more universal.

Q. How was ForeMost chosen?

- A.** ForeMost was chosen based on a DOE-wide survey conducted by this office. Most sites had either already chosen ForeMost or were looking into choosing it. Additionally, DOE Headquarters invited representatives of the vendors who had passed the DOD 5015.2 qualification testing to demonstrate their products at Germantown to allow many to assess their comparable features.

Q. Can other records management software packages interface with ForeMost?

- A.** We are not sure if other records management packages can interface with ForeMost. We would have to do some research to find the answer. (Why would you need this anyway? Exporting/importing between document management systems.) In case you buy Trim for your organization while everyone else uses ForeMost; it is a compatibility issue.

Q. The originator controls if it's a record. Does this apply to replies also?

- A.** If the e-mail is internal within the CIO office, the originator declared the e-mail a record (if appropriate.) The recipient of the e-mail record would declare the response (to the e-mail) as a record.

If the e-mail is received from "outside" the CIO office (external), then the CIO recipient would have the responsibility of declaring the e-mail a record, if appropriate.

Q. It appears that the system is not totally automated, i.e., when a record needs to be deleted, the user is involved.

- A.** The process used to dispose of "paper" records will be used for electronic records also. This process includes notification to the record creator that the record is available for disposal and requesting concurrence for disposal. In this way a record that should be maintained for additional time due to need or to support litigation can be retained for additional time.

Q. How will ownership of the record be handled when a person leaves?

- A.** As has always been the policy, the records belong to the organization to which it pertains. So the records will always be under the ownership of the organization responsible for maintenance of its records. (Which brings a question to my mind; how do we make sure that when people leave, they hand over to somebody and not just destroy or delete potential or/and actual records?) If the record is in ForeMost, we have it. If it is paper, hopefully the Division Office has it, otherwise we will probably lose it.

Q. How accurate are your projections in terms of storage?

- A.** We have no projections at this time. The vendor was not able to give us this information. We will be developing metrics based on our own research and study of this pilot.

Q. Can you store multi-media?

- A.** Yes. Over 200 electronic document formats are available to be read using the ForeMost viewer.

Q. Suppose you say it's not a record and it is, is there a mechanism for identifying documents that should have been declared a record but was not?

- A. When in doubt, keep it. Training associated with the ForeMost project will cover the types of documents that are Federal records and help the users to make that decision.

Question From E-mail received August 3, 2001

Q. When filing a document, how large can it be?

- A. When filing a document in the ForeMost records management system, there is no limitation on file size at this time. We are reviewing our long-term storage requirements and options in preparation for storage issues anticipated in the future as the volume of records increases.

Question From E-mail received September 13, 2001

Q. I store my e-mails in Outlook folders as my filing system. Why do I need ForeMost?

- A. E-mail folders are part of the e-mail system. Your e-mail folders cannot be part of an official filing system because the folders are accessible only to you. Records must be available for retrieval and access by those who need them. ForeMost, a records management system provides this access through a centralized repository. The Access Control List (ACL) controls access to the records. Also, the placing of the records into ForeMost will provide the retention information to manage the disposition of the information.